

There was Battle Creek

By LEO PERRY 4/-36-95
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It was a beautiful area framed by striking mountains on the east and sparkling Utah Lake on the west. Mormon pioneers who moved in the mid-1800s to what is now known as Pleasant Grove found just meadows for cattle grazing and plenty of good land for farming.

It was a peaceful place with no indication of the coming "war" between settlers and native inhabitants.

Mildred Sutich, a native of Pleasant Grove, has made a life work of collecting diaries, pamphlets and books on the settling of her city and the Indian War of 1849. She plans to write a book later this year.

Brigham Young, the second president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and early Mormon colonizer, sent three men down south of Salt Lake City to find locations for future settlements," Sutich explains.

"The three men, Philo T. Farnsworth, John Mercer and William H. Adams, traveled through what is now Lehi and American Fork before coming on southeast to Pleasant Grove.

"They fell in love with this place," she says, waving her arms around to indicate her community. They liked the timber and rock from which houses and a fort could be built. They liked the rich earth for farming — and there was plenty of water from mountain streams and springs.

"The three men staked out the city and left markers for farms for themselves," Sutich says.

"Then they went back to Salt Lake City and reported their findings to Brigham Young."

Eventually at least seven families came to settle the area, sleeping in their wagon boxes until they were able to build cabins.

"But there was trouble on the horizon," Sutich says. "A small band of Indians began stealing cattle and horses from the pioneers in Tooele and Draper. These renegades had split off from the Timpanogos Utes and were causing mischief."

Brigham Young wanted this mischief stopped, so he organized a small troop of about 50 men under the direction of Capt. John Scott to deal with the thefts.

Dimmick B. Huntington, a school teacher and interpreter, accompanied the troop.

"The Mormons found the larger band of Utes, who were led by Chief Little Chief, and sought aid from them in quelling the trouble," Sutich says.

Little Chief said his tribe was not stealing cattle but a small band of renegades was.

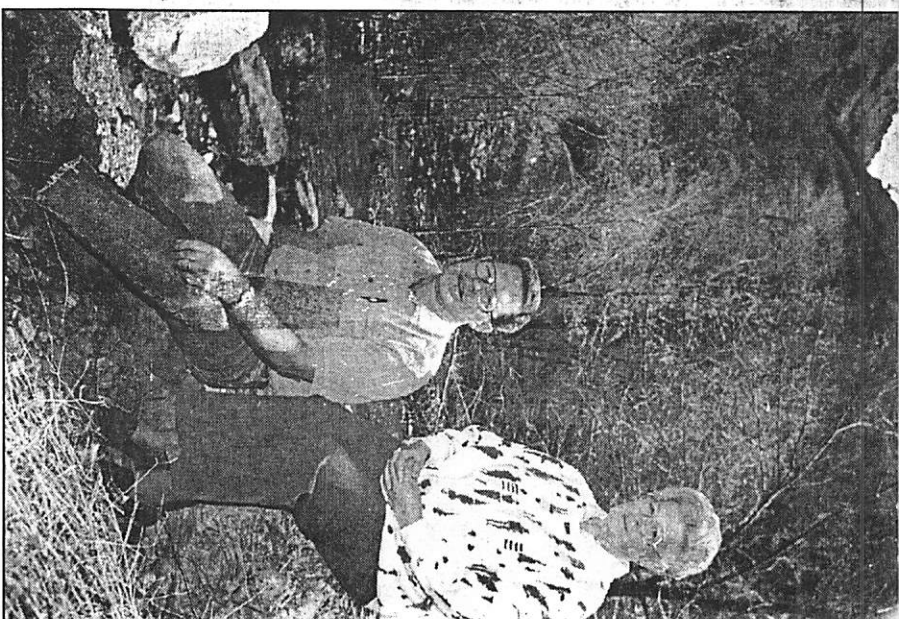
Under cover of darkness, the troops rode up to the base of what later became known as Battle Mountain, and at dawn, they shouted for the Indians to surrender.

"Instead, the Indians, under the command of Roman Nose, began firing the one gun they had and their bows and arrows. At least two of the soldiers were hit by arrows but were not seriously injured," Sutich says.

Four of the Indians, including Roman Nose, were shot and killed in the violence that followed. The others were captured and taken back to Salt Lake City, where they were given food and shelter.

Because of this battle, Pleasant Grove was called Battle Creek from about 1850 to 1852. It later was renamed Pleasant Grove after a grove of cottonwood trees in the area.

Another skirmish with Indians was reported in 1863, when a group of soldiers from Ft. Douglas came to Pleasant Grove to put down an uprising. The soldiers and Indians exchanged shots, but no one



Daily Herald Photo/Matthew R. Smith

Mildred Sutich and Dale Warburton sit at the approximate site of a Indian-Mormon battle in the mid-1800s. The confrontation occurred what is now called Battle Creek in Pleasant Grove.

on either side was injured, Sutich says.

An Eagle Scout project slated for the near future is expected to result in the placing of a plaque south of the mouth of the canyon at the eastern terminus of Battle Creek Drive.

The plaque will outline the history of Battle Creek and Battle Mountain. A plaque that tells the story of the first battle is already in place at 200 South Main in Pleasant Grove.

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